

DEATH OF BELA HUBBARD

Mr Bela Hubbard, the oldest citizen of Randolph, died at the residence of his son-in-law in Alliance, Feb. 1st, in the 96th year of his age. The immediate cause of his death was a fall upon the ice which produced serious injuries, and he survived them but a few days. His funeral occurred in Randolph Feb. 3. The funeral discourse was delivered by the Pastor of the church of the Disciples in Randolph, of which the deceased had long been a member. This discourse is inserted in the PORTAGE COUNTY DEMOCRAT by request:

FUNERAL ADDRESS By Rev. S. K. Sweetman

Fellow Travelers to the Grave:

The pen of inspiration solemnly inquires, What is your life? The reply, confirmed by observation, and the undeviating record of mortality is: "It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." How striking and forcible the comparison. The vapor rises in the morning at the sun's first touch and glides gracefully up the mountain side, light, beautiful, and apparently substantial. Yet the very beams that generated will scatter it. In an hour you look for it, but it is gone, and has left no sign of its existence, no fragment of its beauty in the place that knew it then, but knows it no more. And, yet on this vapor, as on a rock, many--alas, too often build houses, palaces and empires, hopes and joys; yea, even the worth of immortality.

How rapid is the flight of time. We look forward and picture to ourselves the probability, and too often rest in the presumptive certainty, that we shall reach an old age, and consequently view the period of our physical dissolution, in the far distant. We turn our thoughts to the past, even back to our earliest childhood recollections, and our years appear as "a tale that is told," Sickness, disease, accident and death are all around us. The young, the middle aged and the old are dropping into the grave; and soon, very soon, these eyes now sparkling with brightness will become dim, and close upon our friends and the world, until the judgment of the great day. The Pale King with his remorseless scythe cuts down alike the tender, lovely flower, and the noxious weed. He regards not a parent's love, a husband's grief, the lonely widow's sigh, nor the orphan's moan. The fleshless traveler pursues his onward, sleepless, tireless course, and with a noiseless step severs the feeble cord of life and "Man goeth to his long home." Death is represented as a cruel and heartless monster, biding away our dearest hopes, and fondest joys, those we love and cherish, in the dark Sheol--ourselves following to the same Egyptian night of unawakened sleep, waging a war of universal extermination upon the helpless race of man, employing all conceivable implements of torture in preparing victims for himself. But, we apprehend that death, as an isolate, compound and vindictive being, has no positive existence. It is only the absence of life, in the same sense as darkness is the absence of light. When the organism of animal life is undermined and destroyed by disease, accident or violence, and the tie which binds the physical and intellectual

organizations is dissolved that is death! The nature of that dissolution called death will be better understood. If we consider its consequences. It terminates at once all the active pursuits of life. Among its subjects, the playful, darling child, in whose rejoicing heart the cradle hymn still echoes, becomes still, the pulse ceases to beat and the heart to throb. The student in the midst of his researches closes his book forever. The din of the factory and the buzz of the exchange are hushed into silence. The plough of the husband-man stands still in the midst of the furrow. The form of the printer is embraced and locked up in the narrow limits of the tomb. The traveler, far from kindred and from home, is arrested on his journey. The mariner's voyage of human life is terminated upon the trackless deep. The tongue of the statesman and orator is paralyzed in the councils of the Nation. The voice of the preacher that proclaimed upon the walls of Zion, salvation for the lost, is heard no more--stilled in the unyielding grasp of the rapacious tomb. Members of the body of Christ, fall like ripe shocks of corn into the ground, the impenitent and disobedient offender is snatched away, and silence reigns in the chambers of the dead.

It may be a melancholy task to reckon with this great tomb builder. Time, to sum up the amount of broken resolutions, neglected duties, wasted opportunities, blighted hopes and withered joys, yet it is one which must be performed. There are some bright pages in our history, as well as numberless spots of sin and crime. Many links have been shattered--the golden chain of life may even now be breaking, still the car moves on. Our household joys may be narrowed, the eyes that beamed in smiles upon the cradle of our infancy and childhood, and filled with joy to witness our riper years, may be dimmed and sealed in darkness, yet the barque of life hurries on, the past is forgotten, and the present occupies the mind alone. At a season when death enters our dwellings, we should realize that the irreversible records of morality is inscribed upon every living thing. Day after day, we are reminded of the declaration, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." At a time when the closest ties are severed, and the firmest bonds are broken, we should feel that our hold upon the feeble cords of life is equally as slender as that of others; that we too are standing upon the very verge of the grave, walking upon the shore of a boundless and eternal world, that the next breath of withering disease may waft us from the abode of the living.

Reflections such as these, are induced on the present solemn occasion called upon as we are to perform the last sad rites of christian burial to an aged pilgrim, who has just closed up forever his earthly career. We see before us extreme old age and the winter of decay and death. With noiseless hand the pale king has removed the staff on which he leaned and he has fallen, no more to rise, until the voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall summon the nations to judgment. We quote as strikingly significant and appropriate language of Holy Writ: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

REMARKS

As the early and continuous history of the deceased bears a most intimate and inseparable

connection with the first settlement of this town, forming the nucleus of its existence and progress as a civilized, industrious, thrifty and moral community, it will no doubt be interesting to the congregation, as well as gratifying to the immediate relatives and friends, to advert briefly to that history, at least, to the most prominent points. This we shall do, relying on the details and facts, as we have been able to gather them, and to some extent form his own statements as made to others. The deceased, Bela Hubbard, was born the 31st of March, 1775, in Middletown, Conn. The first settlers in this immediate section, (Known subsequently, and now, as Randolph, received its name from Col. Lamuel Storrs, after, or in honor of is son Randolph Storrs) was Bela Hubbard and Salmon Ward. They removed from Connecticut to Jefferson Co., N.Y., in 1799, where they remained until 1802. They then started for this region, known as the "Connecticut Reserve," which was viewed at that time, as "the land of promise." The deceased with his companion, Salmon Ward, arrived in Randolph, on the 31st of March 1802, which being the Birthday of Bela Hubbard, made his age at that time, 27 years. They slept the first night under an old oak tree, a few rods north west of Donnell's tannery, nearly a half mile west of the center. The earth was their only bed, and the roots of the tree their pillow. On being subsequently asked, "What bed clothes they had", Bela Hubbard, pointing upward significantly replied, "The Heavens." Thus in a wilderness, where civilization had as yet never dawned, and where the deity was only recognized in the works and manifestations of nature, though even here as elsewhere, creation hymned forth the great Creator's praise, surrounded by the native Aborigines and beasts of prey, in the midst of whom, danger and violence were imminent, these pioneer settlers, in connection with others who followed, exhibited a courage and fortitude which even now, commands the commendation and gratitude of their friends, posterity, and that present occupants of the surrounding country.

They brought with them a yoke of oxen and a cart, flour, ham, axes, augers and other tools with which to prepare to begin to live. The next day they cut down the trees around them and their encampment, except the one which afforded them shelter on the night of their arrival, and which stood for many years in the road, west of the center. With the logs they built them a cabin, 18 feet by 12, with one roof made of bass-wood logs, split and hollowed to carry off the water. They also laid a floor of the same material, called puncheons, and the whole was completed the same day. As it rained all day and they had to labor hard, his companion, Salmon Ward took a severe cold, which nearly cost him his life. He finally recovered and not liking Western life, he returned to New York, and Bela Hubbard was left alone and remained six weeks without seeing the face of a white man. In July ensuing, Arad Upson with his family arrived from Plymouth, Conn., and were followed soon after by Joseph Harris, Esq., from Middletown, Conn. In the winter of 1802-3, there were six persons in town, Arad Upson, his wife and two sons--Salmon and Lorenzo--Joseph Harris and Calvin Ward. During the season, Salmon Ward again returned to New York, and on his return brought with him his older brother, Josiah Ward and his family, consisting of his wife and six children. Some time after their arrival, the deceased married the eldest daughter of Josiah Ward, the only marriageable female among the settlers and is said to have been the first marriage that occurred in the town. The first white child born in the township was Saphronia Upson, a daughter of Arad

Upson. She was born in the spring of 1803. The first death of an inhabitant among the white settlers was in Feb. 1804., It was Clarrissa Ward, wife of Josiah Ward and mother-in-law of the deceased, at the age of thirty-six years. She was esteemed as a sincere and devout christian. A short time before her death, while walking on the hill about a mile west of the center she exclaimed, "What a beautiful spot this would be for a burying place". She died a few days after. Rev. Henry Shewell preached the funeral sermon, (he was from Deerfield) the first ever preached in the township. She was buried at the spot where she stood when she admired the place for a grave yard, and which, on that account, has been and, and still is used as a burying place, and where this care-worn pilgrim will soon be laid in his quiet repose.

The second wife of the deceased, was a maiden lady whom he married on his subsequent return to Conn., and who was raised in connection with the domestic relations of some members of his fathers family. His two wives by whom he had ten children, now lie in the west burying ground, and also one of his grand children.. Four of his children, (deceased) lie in separate localities and in distant graves, in the State of New York and Michigan; and six we are informed are still living. Time will not permit of a more extended notice of his early history, as associated with the sacrifices, hardships, privations and labors, connected with the first settlement of this township, all of which in connection with his companions and fellow pioneers, are full of interest.

His religious affinities and association, were first with the Calvinist, or close communion Baptist Church, among whom he was deemed a worthy and consistent christian. In 1831, brethren Hubbard and French from Deerfield, preachers in the christian church, known as Disciples, visited this place, and having no human creed to present to the people, as an object of religious confidence and trust, and no human authority to set up and urge in respect to faith and doctrines, preaching not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, proclaiming the ancient gospel, presenting the word of God as the only authorized rule of faith and practice, and that all who were truly christians as one body in Christ, and members of the same heavenly family. With these scriptural views and teachings, they began to break bread together in commemoration of the sufferings, death, and triumphant resurrection of the divine Redeemer, in which the Baptists united as believers in the one common Lord and Master. Those who had been previously known as Baptists united with those known as Disciples, or christians, and became one in church organization and fellowship, for the preaching of the word, and the faithful observance of the institutions and ordinances of the gospel, among these, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Among those so uniting in the simplicity and truth of the gospel, was Bela Hubbard, the subject of the present notice, and who lies before us in the cold embrace of death.

He held the office of Deacon for some ten years, in which position, as well as previously, his uniform deportment, was that of a sincere, devout and exemplary christian. About 1857 his removal from Randolph caused a transfer of his residence to the village of Mogadore and his membership with the church of Christ in that place. He subsequently removed to Atwater, and from thence to Alliance, where he remained until his death. He is the last one of the original number, forming the organization of Christian church in

Randolph.

We are informed that it was an understanding between himself and the late Justin Belding, that when he died, Justin should toll the bell announcing his decease and age. But this old friend and fellow disciple has preceded him a short time, in entering the valley of the shadow of death. Up to within five days of his decease, he was in the enjoyment of his usual health and vigor, considering his extreme age, but accidentally falling from a porch at his son-in-law's residence in Alliance, his hip bone was broken and he was otherwise bruised and injured, which no doubt hastened his death.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying: Write, blessed are the dead, which did in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Therefore, in respect to this aged father in Israel, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Thy work is done, thy labor is ended, Rest weary saint. Home at last.

To the surviving children, relatives and friends, we tender expressions of christian sympathy and affection, commending you in all your sorrows and bereavement to that kind and holy Being who himself bore our infirmities, and is able to soothe our broken spirits, and to sustain, bless and save the trusting soul.

Christian Friends: the event of death is indeed a solemn and momentous one in our history, but it does not involve so much responsibility as living. Let it not be forgotten, that it is during life, not in death that we form the characters in which we must appear in the judgment, and lay the foundation of our future happiness or woe.

Time is short, and we cannot be too diligent in improving it, to secure our soul's eternal welfare, to acquaint ourselves with God, that we might be at peace with him and our fellow man, then shall we "die the death of the righteous and our last end be like his." Soon the night of death, the darkness of the tomb, and the unchangeable decrees of eternity will show an impassable gulf, and then all hope will be gone forever. Heaven bless and comfort these mourning friends, and may they with us be numbered with the heirs of salvation and dwell in the everlasting kingdom of light and immortality forever and ever, Amen.